

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT**  
VIRGINIA EMPLOYMENT COMMISSION

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**FIELD GUIDANCE MEMORANDUM #03-01**

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**TO:** LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

**FROM:** WIA DIVISION

**SUBJECT:** CREDENTIALS AND CERTIFICATIONS

**DATE:** MARCH 27, 2003

**ATTACHMENTS:** SUPPLEMENTAL DATA COLLECTION FORM

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Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) provide training opportunities that enable customers to gain the necessary skills to obtain and maintain employment. Developing credentials based on locally approved and demand driven competencies can create a stronger relationship among local employers, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) service providers and WIA participants. A credentialing system must be developed at the local level to identify, document and report recognized credentials attained by participants in Title I-B funded programs. This memo establishes the parameters for the development and documentation of competencies gained through certified training that result in credentials recognized by the LWIBs. Additionally, this memo provides a mechanism for local areas to gain credit for participants who attain credentials through Title I-B funded programs.

**DEFINITIONS**

For purposes of this memo, the following terms are defined as such:

- a. Competency – The possession of required skills, knowledge, expertise, qualifications or capacities for the task involved.
- b. Credential – Nationally, State or locally recognized degree or certificate. Credentials include, but are not limited to a high school diploma, GED or other recognized equivalents, post-secondary degrees/certificates, recognized skill standards, and licensure or industry-recognized certificates, including State Education Agency and Regulatory Board recognized credentials. Locally recognized credentials are those that are developed to meet needs of local business and industry, and may be earned through business/industry training.

**CREDENTIAL GUIDELINES**

WIA section 136(b)(2)(A)(iv) establishes a comprehensive performance accountability system to assess the effectiveness of local areas in the attainment of a recognized credential by participants who

enter unsubsidized employment, or by participants who are eligible youth age 19 through 21 who enter postsecondary education, advanced training, or unsubsidized employment.

LWIBs are encouraged to recognize successful completion of training services, including those listed above, that are designed to enable individuals to enter or re-enter employment, retain employment, or advance into better employment.

*Note: Credentials can be attained while a person is still participating in services and up to three quarters following exit from the program.*

## **State Responsibilities**

The State has identified Department of Education and Regulatory Boards recognized credentials for inclusion in the state-level list of credentials. Additionally, the State will provide the capability for the local workforce areas to capture and report data on participants who attain recognized credentials after the participant exits the local program. The State will ensure the credentials are included in the performance measurement process.

## **Local Area Responsibilities**

Local areas will develop a local policy outlining the criteria for identifying credentials that can be awarded to participants in adult, dislocated worker and older youth programs. LWIBs are encouraged to recognize successful completion of those training services that are designed to equip individuals to enter or re-enter employment, or advance into better employment. These services benefit the employee, the employer and the community. The LWIB will capture, document and report the attainment of these credentials in a timely manner.

LWIBs may establish credentials that are awarded to participants of workforce area programs. The local credential policy should consist of the following:

- Identification of what the credential is
- How achievement is to be measured
- How the credential relates to successful participation in the labor market
- Which group(s) can attain the credential

In order to determine the continued relevance of the credentials developed, LWIBs should review competencies and the resulting credentials, regularly. Shared communications between local employers and the one-stop providers may be used as a mechanism for leveraging the resources of the community.

## **GUIDELINES FOR YOUNGER YOUTH SKILL ATTAINMENT, DIPLOMA OR EQUIVALENT**

According to the Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, the state and LWIBs are responsible for measuring the core indicators of performance for youth ages 14-18. Therefore, LWIBs should recognize successful completion of training services and skills attainment

that are designed to enable younger youth to enter or re-enter employment, retain employment, or advance into better employment. The credentials process can be used to measure success in other areas undertaken by youth.

### **Younger Youth (14-18) Skill Attainment**

- This is a measure of all in-school youth and any out-of-school youth assessed to be in need of basic skills, work readiness skills, and/or occupational skills. Certification and credentialing for younger youth entails the development and utilization of a credential intended for public use, which indicates and/or describe the competencies attained by individual participants.
- To measure skill attainment for the younger youth skill attainment measure, local programs must assess youth at intake to determine whether they are in need of basic skills, work readiness skills, and/or occupational skills. This assessment will include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes and supporting service needs. To determine whether youth meet the skill attainment goals will require a pre-assessment and post-assessment of skill level. The use of a performance-based assessment with standardized scoring is encouraged. All data and methods to determine skill attainment goals must be documented and are subject to audit.
- This credential may be an employability profile, product portfolio, job passport, program transcript or mini resume beneficial to youth and acceptable to employers and others.

### **Younger Youth (14-18) Diploma or Equivalent Attainment**

- This is a measure of those youth who register without a diploma or equivalent and who attained the measure (credential) of a secondary diploma or equivalent by the end of the first quarter after exit.
- Those participants who exit WIA while still enrolled in secondary education are excluded from the measure. This exclusion is because some participants may decide to leave the program before finishing high school. It would be impossible for those participants to have attained a diploma or equivalent at the time of exit if they are still enrolled in high school.

## **CREDENTIAL DOCUMENTATION**

In order to obtain credit for a credential attained by a Title I-B WIA participant, the following information must be collected and made available for review by the WIA Division and auditors:

- Identification of the WIA participant;
- Identification of how the training is to be measured for attainment of a credential;
- Identification of the credential attained;
- Identification of organization certifying the credential;
- Date when credential was awarded;
- How credential was awarded; (result of a test, completion of a course(s))
- Evidence of award (for example: a copy of the certificate, copy of the transcript);

- Is this a locally developed or identified credential; and
- Organization awarding the credential.

## **Supplemental Data Collection**

The WIA management information reporting processes allows for supplementary data to be collected for certain data elements relating to the performance measurement system. Credentials must be obtained either during participation or by the end of the third quarter after exit from services (excluding follow-up services). Credentials attained when participants are active in the program should be entered into VWN. Credentials attained after exit should be included in the supplemental data submitted to the WIA Division.

Supplementary data sources that can be used to collect credential information include (1) Case management, follow-up services, and or surveys of participants to determine that the individual received a credential or (2) Record sharing and/or automated record matching with administrative/ other databases to determine that the participant has received a credential.

## **REFERENCES AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Code of Virginia, Section 9-329 1(H)

Public Law 105-220, Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Section 136.

Federal Register, August 11, 2000, Part II, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, 20 CFR Part 652 et al., Workforce Investment Act; Final Rules, Part 666.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 7-99, March 3, 2000, SUBJECT: Core and Customer Satisfaction Performance Measures for Workforce Investment System.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 8-99, March 3, 2000; SUBJECT: Negotiating Performance Goals; and Incentives and Sanctions Process under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

Training and Employment Guidance Letter No.14-00, March 5, 2001; SUBJECT: Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Performance Reporting System.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter No.14-00, Change 1; Dated November 19, 2001: SUBJECT: Guidance on the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Management Information and Reporting System.

## SUPPLEMENTARY DATA COLLECTION FORM

LWIB Number: \_\_\_\_\_ LWIB Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_

WIA Participant Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Program: (Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth) \_\_\_\_\_

Social Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Exit Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Outcome Attained: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Credentialing Activity: (identify the activity the participant is participating in that included the credential attainment) \_\_\_\_\_

Date credential awarded: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When was the credential awarded: \_\_\_\_\_

How was the credential awarded (result of a test, completion of a course(s)): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Is this a locally developed or an identified Board Approved credential? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

Organization awarding the credential: \_\_\_\_\_